

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9173

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 6377

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, OCLR, VE, US

SUBJECT: CIVAIR CLEARANCES FOR FLYING TIGERS

REF: STATE 143301

1. SUMMARY: UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM VIASA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION HAS DENIED CHARTER FLIGHTS REQUESTED BY FLYING TIGER LINES, WHICH IS UNDER CONTRACT TO CARRY DISNEY ON PARADE SHOW CARACAS TO LONDON. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY WAS APPROACHED ON JUNE 19 BY GENE COLOMBUS, DIRECTOR OF DISNEY ON PARADE, FOR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING A CLEARANCE FOR TWO FLYING TIGER LINE DC 8 CHARTERS - CARACAS-LONDON. COLOMBUS REVIEWED HISTORY OF DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING CLEARANCE FOR CHARTERS IN BOTH COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA AND REPORTED THAT HE HAD SIGNED CONTRACT WITH FLYING TIGER LINE IN AMOUNT OF \$97,000 TO CARRY DISNEY ON PARADE SHOW FROM MEDELLIN TO CARACAS TO LONDON. THIS WAS DONE ONLY AFTER VIASA HAD STATED THEIR INABILITY TO HANDLE THESE CHARTERS DUE TO LACK OF EQUIPMENT. IN BETWEEN DISNEY ON PARADE'S ARRIVAL IN CARACAS AND CLOSING OF SHOW IN CARACAS, VIASA PURCHASED ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT AND OFFERED COLOMBUS CHARTER OF ONE LOAD CARACAS-NEW YORK TO BE TRANSFERRED TO FLYING TIGER LINE IN NEW YORK FOR NEW YORK-LONDON LEG. SECOND LOAD WOULD BE PICKED UP BY FLYING TIGERS IN CARACAS AND FLOWN LONDON DIRECT. ADDITIONAL COST ACCRUE TO DISNEY ON PARADE FOR VIASA PARTICIPATION ON CARACAS-NEW YORK LET ESTIMATED AT \$20,000.

3. EMBASSY ATTEMPTED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO CONTACT OFFICIALS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AERONAUTICAL OFFICE TO RESOLVE THIS

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ISSUE ON JUNE 19, AS COLOMBUS INDICATED HE MUST MAKE DECISION NO

LATER THAN CLOSE OF BUSINESS THAT DATE. EMBASSY OFFICER ALSO CONTACTED VIASA FREIGHT MANAGER AND GENERAL OPERATIONS MANAGER WHO INSIST THAT UNDER FIFTH FREEDOM PRINCIPAL, VIASA HAD RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CHARTER TO EXTENT OF ITS ABILITY.

4. LATE ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 19, COLOMBUS FINALIZED OCEAN SHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHOW WHICH HE HAD MADE ON A STANDBY BASIS IN CASE FLYING TIGERS, WHOSE CONTRACT WAS CONTINGENT UPON OBTAINING LANDING RIGHTS, COULD NOT DO SO.

5. CONTRARY TO INFORMATION IN PARAGRAPH ONE OF REFTTEL, COLOMBUS SAYS FIRST TRIP DUE JUNE 23RD, SECOND DUE JUNE 25TH. HAD EMBASSY BEEN GIVEN MORE TIME, WE MAY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL OFFICIALS AND OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR CHARTERS. IN ANY EVENT, COLOMBUS HAS PROMISED TO FORWARD COPY OF CONTRACT HE HAD WITH FLYING TIGERS TO US FROM DISNEY ON PARADE BURBANK OFFICES, AND EMBASSY WILL DISCUSS WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION AND, IF NECESSARY, AT HIGHER LEVELS IN GOV IN ATTEMPT TO BRING SOME CLEARER UNDERSTANDING INTO GROUND RULES FOR CHARTER FLIGHTS.

6. COMMENT: SINCE VIASA'S PURCHASE OF STRETCH JET FREIGHTER, DIRECTOR GENERAL HAS BECOME VERY STICKY ABOUT CHARTER CLEARANCES. HE IS DOUBTLESS UNDER PRESSURE FROM VIASA TO ASSURE THAT THEY RECEIVE ANY FREIGHT BUSINESS THEY CAN HANDLE. EMBASSY OFFICER WAS INFORMED BY VIASA OFFICIAL THAT DURING WEEK OF JUNE 9 THROUGH 14, PROPOSED FREIGHT FLIGHTS WERE CANCELLED THREE TIMES BECAUSE OF INSUFFICIENT CARGO.
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